NEWBERY MEDAL-WINNING AUTHOR

KATHERINE PATERSON

Same Same Stuff Stars

"Beautifully written, wonderfully told."

-SCHOOL LIBRARY JOURNAL (starred review)

1 Wishing on a Star

HEN SHE heard the first yelp, Angel was at the sink washing the supper dishes. She thought the sound had come from the couple in the upstairs apartment beginning their nightly fight. She was late washing up, having waited supper, hoping that since it was Friday, Verna would get home in time for the three of them to sit around the table and eat together like a family.

It was when the yelp turned into crying that she realized where it was coming from. "Bernie!" Angel raced down the hall to the living room, not even stopping to wipe the suds off her hands. Bernie sat on the rug, whimpering and staring at the couch. Flames were dancing up from a worn cushion. "What are you doing?" she yelled, slapping the open box of kitchen matches from his hand. The matches scattered over the rug. "You want to kill us all?"

"I just wanted to see if it would really burn," he said, still whimpering.

She raced back to the kitchen and grabbed the dishpan, not stopping to take out the dishes before she ran back to the fire. Angel sloshed the dirty dishwater over the flame. It sizzled angrily and died. She stood watching the steam, her heart pounding. When she could speak, it was a yell. "I swear, Bernie Morgan, how old are you?"

"Seven," he muttered.

"Well, you act like you're two." She knelt, putting the dishpan down, so she could pick up the matches and put them back in the box. Her hands were shaking. "Now I'm going to put these away, and don't you ever touch them again, you hear me?" She stood up. "You can bring the dishpan to the kitchen for me."

He followed her down the hall, rattling the dishes against the side of the plastic pan. "Don't tell Mama," he said.

"It won't matter if I tell Mama or not. The minute she comes in here she's going to smell smoke and know something happened. I swear you're going to run me crazy if you don't kill us both first." On tiptoe, she put the matchbox on the highest shelf she could reach. Bernie plumped the dishpan down on the floor. "Where do you think you're going?" she asked his retreating back.

"To watch TV. You're too mean to talk to."

She put the dishpan back into the sink and marched down

the hall. Snatching the remote out of his hand, she threw it on the sodden couch. The whole room stank.

"Quit it!" he said.

"Do you think you can just sit there on the floor watching TV like nothing happened? Come on." She grabbed Bernie's hand, dragging him to his feet. "We'll go out and wait for Mama to come back, and then you can just tell her yourself what a fool thing you did."

He set his feet and tried to wriggle his hand out of her grasp, but Angel was wiry, and the boy was no match for her. Still, by the time she had dragged him out the heavy front door and onto the porch, her fury was spent. He was always into things. She should have been watching more closely. That's what Mama would say when she came home. Just where were you, Miss Angel Morgan, while your brother was trying to burn down the house? Huh? Where were you?

And where are you right now, Verna? Did you forget tomorrow is Saturday and we have to make an early start? Angel let go of Bernie's hand and went over and sat down on the edge of the porch, her feet on the top step. It was nicer outside than in the hot, smelly apartment. The night had absorbed some of the stickiness of the summer day. "Sit down, Bernie," she said gently, and patted the spot next to her. He stayed where he was. She could almost feel

Angel Morgan's family is falling apart

Hernie, at their great-grandmother's crumbling Vermont farmhouse. Grandma spends most of her time wrapped in a blanket by the wood stove.

There is one bright spot in Angel's world—a mysterious stranger who teaches Angel all about the stars and planets and constellations. Carving out a new life proves harder than Angel ever imagined. But she feels a tiny spark of hope when she remembers what the stranger said—that she is made of the same stuff as stars.

"Few authors explore the theme of what defines a family with more compassion and sensitivity than Paterson."

-PUBLISHERS WEEKLY (starred review)

"Paterson's plain, beautiful words root
the wonder of astronomy in the gritty details
of daily survival—managing it with laughter
as well as tears."—ALA BOOKLIST (starred review)

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